



APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE DEMOCRATS

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Democrats Work to Help Those Left Behind By Republican Congress, White House

FY 2007 Science, State, Justice, Commerce Appropriations Bill

WASHINGTON – This year, individuals making over a million dollars a year will get \$40 billion in tax cuts and programs that help poor Americans are again squeezed.

Today the House Appropriations Committee considers the Science, State, Justice, Commerce (SSJC) funding bill for fiscal year 2007. Democrats will offer several amendments meant to help those left behind by the Republican Congress and the Republican White House.

MINIMUM WAGE

Last week, the Appropriations Committee passed an increase to the minimum wage on the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education bill. The bill was to be considered by the House this week, but now Republican Leadership is holding it up as they scramble to find ways to kill the provision.

Today, Reps. Dave Obey (D-WI), Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee, Steny Hoyer (D-MD), House Democratic Whip, and Alan Mollohan (D-WV), Ranking Member of the Science, State, Justice, Commerce Subcommittee, will offer the same amendment to this bill. The amendment would increase minimum wage from its current level of \$5.15 to \$7.25 by January 1, 2009. The minimum wage has not been increased since 1997.

Minimum wage isn't just for teens looking to earn spending money. There are over 7 million people working minimum wage jobs. Nearly three-quarters are adults over the age of 20, many of whom have families to support.

LEGAL SERVICES

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) provides legal assistance to low income Americans with no place else to turn. 50 million Americans are eligible for LSC Services. LSC-funded programs are the nation's primary source of legal assistance to women who are victims of domestic violence. 73% of those seeking LSC assistance are

women, most with children. However, Because of the budget cuts, from 2003 through 2005, 16 field offices have been closed, 100 fewer attorneys and 240 fewer paralegals and other LSC grantee personnel are able to help eligible clients, and the number of cases handled by LSC declined by 30,000. The September 2005 *Justice Gap* study by LSC concluded that 50% of the eligible Americans seeking assistance from LSC are turned away for lack of resources.

Dave Obey is offering an amendment to increase funding for LSC by \$25 million, eliminating the \$25 million in cuts made to this program over the last two years.

SURVEY OF INCOME AND PROGRAM PARTICIPATION (SIPP)

The Survey of Income and Program Participation is the most comprehensive program to collect data used to study poverty in America. This data helps the government to know what works and what doesn't and is used when weighing decisions on things like disability payments, food stamps, and welfare to work programs.

This bill would stop SIPP's work while the governments studies how a better survey might be done. This would leave the government flying blind as it makes critical decisions on how to spend ever scarce resources until a new survey could be started – 2009 at the earliest.

Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY) is offering an amendment to increase funding for SIPP by \$10 million to allow SIPP to continue its important work until a replacement survey was up and running.

These amendments all put the needs of the American people first and give a helping hand to our countries most vulnerable.

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